Committee as a bipartisan bill and one I think will improve the energy policy in this country.

Energy is a very important policy. We don't think about it much. I know most all of us get up in the morning and we just flick a switch someplace in our house. That switch turns on lights and we turn on the television set, it turns on all the things we use all day. While we are sleeping, the air-conditioner is running. We have all these conveniences, and we do not necessarily understand that all of it comes from somewhere beyond a switch. So energy has been pretty easy for this country. Now we are running into some interesting questions and challenges. We have to develop a more thoughtful, more sensible energy policy for the long-term future.

There is an airplane which is now parked in a museum. I believe it was tail No. 27,000, an old 707 that used to be Air Force One. It was the Air Force One that flew President Reagan around, and others. It was the Air Force One that was in Dallas, TX, in fact, the day John F. Kennedy was assassinated. One of its last trips before it was retired to a museum was a trip to Asia. I was a member of that delegation, going to meet with the President of China and others.

In a cabin on that little old airplane flying over the Pacific one night, about 10 or 11 o'clock at night, one of our Senate colleagues, John Glenn, was sitting there with us. I was peppering John Glenn with questions about his circling the Earth as an astronaut back 40 years prior to that time. I was a young kid and I had been listening to the radio that day, and I listened to this account of this astronaut circling the Earth. The whole world was focused on what this astronaut, up alone in *Friendship 7*, a tiny little capsule, was doing.

I asked him a lot of questions about it that evening. I had the opportunity as a new Member of the Senate with my colleague John Glenn to pepper him with a lot of questions. One of my questions was this. I said: My understanding back then was that the city of Perth, Australia, when you were orbiting the Earth that night, turned on every light in the city as a signal to the astronaut flying alone orbiting the Earth. Do you remember the ability to look down and see the lights from Perth, Australia?

He said: I do, I do. I remember this brilliant light coming up from Perth, Australia, where all the citizens decided to shine up a light to this astronaut flying alone on *Friendship 7*.

The only evidence of life on Earth as he orbited the dark side of the Earth was energy, light—human beings turning on a light switch and lighting a city to light the way for an astronaut orbiting the Earth.

Energy is a significant part of our lives every single day and virtually in every way. As I said, we take it pretty much for granted.

Let me talk about the challenges, if I might. One of the significant challenges is oil. We have this big old planet of ours. We have roughly 6.5 billion neighbors on this planet. We circle the Sun. We have this prodigious need for oil, so we stick straws in the earth, called drilling rigs, and suck oil out of the earth. We suck about 84 million barrels of oil a day out of this planet of ours—84 million barrels a day we suck out of this earth.

We use 21 million barrels in this country alone. In this little patch of ground called the United States of America, we have built an unbelievable economy, dramatically improved the standard of living over a long period of time, and we have an unending thirst for oil. So one-fourth of all of the oil used on this planet is used in this country, this place on the globe.

Unfortunately, a substantial amount of the oil is under the sands of the Middle East and in unstable parts of the world. Here is what happens. When we import oil, here is what we use the oil for: 67 percent is used for transportation. So nearly 70 percent of the oil we use in this country is used in the vehicle fleet or for transportation. One of the things we are discussing here in the Energy bill is this issue of trying to make these vehicles more efficient. If we use 70 percent of the oil in this country for transportation and we have had very little change in efficiency of vehicles, then the question should be and is, Should not we make vehicles more efficient?

Here is an example. This is a chart you can't see particularly well: Auto Fuel Efficiency Versus Performance. Do you see what has happened on the blue line, performance—zero to 60 in a nanosecond? Increased performance, more power, more speed. What has happened with respect to miles per gallon? Just like that, right flat across.

Part of that is the consumer. The consumer wants to buy big, heavy cars, fast cars. I understand that. In fact, here is a survey. I was very surprised. CNW Research pointed out that overall fuel economy—this is a couple of years ago—is No. 12 in concern by consumers. I am sure it has changed now. But cupholders and sound systems ranked above the issue of overall fuel economy. I expect that is not the case now when you are driving up to the gas pump and in some vehicles putting in $40, $50, $60 or $70 worth of gasoline into that vehicle. So perhaps that has changed.

But this legislation does a lot of things with respect to energy. It requires an improvement in the efficiency of vehicles. I know automobile companies came here last week. I had a chance to talk to the CEOs of the three big U.S. auto companies. I know they are taking the same position they have always taken—not now, not us, not today.

The fact is, we must, it seems to me, insist that our vehicle fleet be more efficient. Because nearly 70 percent of the oil we use in this country is being used in our vehicles, the only way we are going to try to extract ourselves from being addicted to foreign oil is to begin to make changes in a range of areas, and that includes making cars more efficient. That means a higher mileage per gallon standard.

We have a circumstance, as I indicated, where a substantial part of the oil is put in one place on this planet and the dramatic need for oil is in another place. Much of where we get our oil is in very troubled parts of the world. We could, one day, wake up with terrorists attacking a refinery somewhere and a shutoff of the oil to this country from foreign sources, and this country would be flat on its back. This country would have its economy in tatters. That is why we need to be much less dependent, we need to find a way to be independent of the need for oil from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, Iran, Iraq, Venezuela—all the places in the world that are unstable, where we have a great reliance on oil. That is at least part of what this bill is about.

I am going to talk about several other things as well, but I, along with my colleague, Senator LARRY CRAIG, a Republican—I am a Democrat—we joined in introducing something called the SAFE Energy Act, Securing America's Future Energy. The Energy Security Leadership Council is a group of really interesting people including some CEOs of major corporations and flag officers in the U.S. military. They studied these issues for several years and put together a plan.

That plan is recommendations to the Nation on Reducing Oil Dependence; trying to make this economy of ours less oil intensive.

I introduced a piece of legislation with Senator CRAIG that implements most all of these recommendations. I would commend it to my colleagues because I think it makes a lot of sense. It talks about expanding the supply of energy, especially renewable energy; also talks about finding additional supplies. We believe we ought to be able to explore and drill more in expanded areas, particularly in the Gulf of Mexico, because there are substantial reserves of oil and gas in the Gulf of Mexico that are attainable without ruining anybody's view or creating other problems.

We believe that in addition to renewable energy and the production of renewable energy, all of the biofuels are necessary. We believe that CAFE standards, or at least automobile efficiency standards, are necessary as well. This piece of legislation brought to the floor of the Senate includes all of them.

Let me continue to talk about oil for a moment and say that when I was a little boy, I remember they drilled one oil well near my hometown in southwestern North Dakota. I lived in a town of 300 people. There wasn't a lot to do, obviously, in a town of 300 people.

So when they brought in a drilling rig and constructed a drilling rig and